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# The Labor News

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## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OF THE MAINE STATE FEDERATION OF LABOR

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DECEMBER, 1935

## Lewis Makes Use of Childish Tactics

Offer to President Green to Lead Industrial Group  
Looked Upon as Mere Prattle

The interest manifested by the public concerning the possibility of a break in the trade union movement because of the formation of an Industrial Union Committee, the initiator of which is John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers of America, who is also chairman, is something that calls for deep consideration.

To all inquirers, the writer has given assurance that neither John Lewis nor any other man or group of men have it in their power to even make "a dent" in the American Federation of Labor, because the organization is not only sound in principle but because it has stood its ground, without flinching, for more than half a century.

Although entertaining no fears regarding anything that might happen as the result of what President Green terms as an attempt to form a new movement, it is a good policy to make little of the interest manifested by the public. There are some, of course, who are elated over the prospect of a fight within the A. F. of L. Nothing would please them any more. On the other hand, hosts of fair-minded people, who appreciate what labor has accomplished through the A. F. of L., are fearful lest the labor movement might suffer considerably.

However, as was expected, something happened a few days ago that put Mr. Lewis in a different light as far as the public is concerned, as his utterances of the past few days have placed him in a position that has greatly decreased his standing as a leader of prominence in the trade union movement.

This came about through a letter written to President Green, in which Lewis stated he would gladly resign the chairmanship of the committee in his favor, if he (Mr. Green) would resign as president of the A. F. of L.

Considered as mere childish prattle was Mr. Lewis' remark, which contained the following query: "Why not return to your father's house?"

If you care to dissociate yourself from your present position, the Committee for Industrial Organization will be happy to make you its chairman in my stead."

What nonsense some people will stop to as a means for gaining their ends! Imagine for a moment that any considerable number of people in the trade union movement, or out of it, would look upon this as anything but mere baloney.

It is most regretful that Mr. Lewis and his associates have seen fit to take such childish means in their efforts to convince the three and one-half million members affiliated with the A. F. of L. that the craft union system is obsolete, and to entertain any hopes that by this flimsy means they can succeed.

This action on the part of Mr. Lewis and officials of other organizations, who joined with him, in their efforts to change the A. F. of L.'s policy, appears to be extremely short-sighted, and if we may say so, somewhat ungrateful. At least two of these, aside from Mr. Lewis' organization, have benefited tremendously from the A. F. of L. during the past few years, or since the institution of the NRA.

These organizations had suffered tremendously as the result of the business depression, and immediately—with the assistance of representatives of the A. F. of L. and through the efforts of State Branches and Central bodies—made unprecedented gains in membership.

In a recent issue of The Labor News, we suggested Mr. Lewis and his associates should have confined their efforts to meeting halls and in conventions. In other

words, it shouldn't have been turned into a public affair, and made the subject of ridicule.

While no fears are entertained regarding any great harm that might come to the labor movement, nevertheless, it is a matter that may retard progress, and to hinder this at this crucial moment in the history of the A. F. of L. is not conducive to the best interests of the millions of workers who are dependent upon the activities and success of that organization.

## "Bosses Want To Be Left Alone"

Opposed to Any Government Plans to Regulate Business—In Fighting Mood at Washington Meeting

Representatives of large corporations and independents answered the call of the President's Coordinator for Industrial Cooperation for the conference held in Washington last Monday, but for no good purpose.

They met Major George L. Berry with a chip on their shoulder, and maintained an attitude of antagonism which, according to reports, almost resulted in an altercation.

Publicity agents for big business made it known several months ago, and this attitude was made plain at the recent convention of the National Business Congress, that business wanted to be left alone, and would oppose all means devised to regulate or in any way interfere with their affairs.

So, it was no surprise that vigorous opposition was manifested at the Washington conference this week, which started immediately after the meeting was opened.

"We've got ours; we are satisfied, and we don't want the Government, nor anyone else, to meddle with our affairs. We have the courts on our side, and through this and other means which money and influence can accomplish, we will again be able to amass great fortunes, and make it possible to re-establish living standards as they were prior to the business depression."

While not told in exactly these words, this is the prevailing sentiment, and every possible effort will be made to re-establish the rule or ruin policy which brought the country almost on the verge of bankruptcy in 1933.

It had been hoped by the President, when creating this new office in the Department of Commerce, that a sufficient number of capitalists were appreciative of that which had been done for them, and that these would willingly cooperate in adopting some sort of a system that would aid in effecting a return of normal employment.

But, it is evident, this element in attendance at the conference are in absolute opposition to any such plan. They are dead set against the Labor Relations Act, the National Social Security Act, the holding company law, and for that matter, are opposed to everything which in any way causes them inconvenience or which is liable to cut into their profits.

According to reliable statistics, the present number of unemployed workers in this country is more than 11,000,000, with something like 35,000,000 dependents, whose support comes from Federal, State and municipal funds. The best that industry can do, when under full steam, it is estimated, may be able to absorb about 3,000,000 unemployed. What is to become of the remaining 8,000,000, unless some provision is made, through shortening of working hours and by other means, is a grave question.

The subjects scheduled for discussion at the Washington conference were of more than ordinary importance, and the least that was expected was that the so-called captains of industry—those who were looked up to as supermen prior to the depression, but who didn't know where they were at—would cooperate in working out this most important problem.

That their attitude may cause a flare-back which might greatly surprise them, is almost certain. Advocates of this plan in Congress had strong hopes something constructive would come from the Washington conference, and disappointed over the results, it would not be at all surprising that the next Congress will pass laws that will make these opponents of progress sit up and think.

## Do Nothing Policy Won't Curb Law Breaking

Federal Prosecution and G-Men Cooperation Needed to Enforce Hawes-Cooper Prison-Made Goods Law

Industry and labor groups which have been fighting unfair competition of prison-made goods have protested the propriety of the Attorney-General's instructions to U. S. district attorneys that no further investigations of violations of the Summer-Ashurst prison industries act be made until the constitutionality of the Federal act is definitely determined. While it is sincerely

reported that the instructions have been withdrawn, the principle needs stressing that it is the business of the executive departments to enforce the laws made by Congress until they are held invalid. A sharp reprimand from Congress is entirely in order if the Department of Justice lies down on its job at the first signs of objection to a law, especially from prison contractors.

To balance the account, it should be entered on the record that considerable credit for the success of U. S. Attorney Donnelly in obtaining an indictment against the Michigan Manufacturing Company of New York is due to the U-men of the Department of Justice. State prosecutions of prison industry law violation have produced indifferent results. Donnelly adopted a new procedure. Although operating from Grand Rapids, Michigan, he called in the G-men to get facts; through them he got at the books of the concern in New York; state lines were eliminated; evasions, legal and otherwise, were stopped. But one such victory is not enough.

After having once slowed down enforcement of the Act, Attorney-General Cummings needs to do more than adopt a do-nothing policy in order to show his good faith. Unless he does take a more aggressive position towards these lawbreakers, somebody may chance that his heart is not in the job of enforcing the act and that he may be sympathetic toward the system operating in his own state of Connecticut, which ships large quantities of prison-made goods into other states in ruinous competition with free industry and with disastrous effect upon labor standards.

State enforcement is not easy. Contracts for 25,000 wood tables from the Ionia and 10,000 metal bridge tables and 40,000 metal chairs from Jackson (Mich.) prisons were allegedly made after passage of the Michigan act prohibiting sale of prison-made goods in Michigan in competition with those manufactured by private enterprise.

Labor wants Federal prosecution and G-men cooperation continued as already stated. Labor is anxious to obtain enforcement of the Summer-Ashurst and Hawes-Cooper Acts and does not want to have progress delayed by either New Deal or regular government agencies, some of which seem to be working at cross purposes and playing into the hands of prison contractors. Industry, too, is watching closely the moves of the Prison Industries Reorganization Administration, which has funds for carrying on this field. Is that to be just another boondoggle? Or is it to be suspected as another deal to delay enforcement of the laws for which labor, industry and the public fought for so many years?

## Kill the "New Deal," It Has Served Its Purpose

So Decide Business Men Through United States Chamber of Commerce Referendum—They've Got Theirs, and It's to H— With Everybody Else

Business men, large and small, have spoken their "little piece" regarding the New Deal, through the United States Chamber of Commerce. According to the result of the vote, an overwhelming majority of U. S. C. members throughout the country are against what they term "further domination by the Government."

In other words, "They've got theirs, and to H— with everybody else."

The fact remains, however, that this referendum and the result of the straw vote conducted by Literary Digest, did not represent the views of the great masses of people, whose votes are what count on election day.

Opponents of the New Deal are making a great hurrah over recent victories in municipal elections, but it is strongly contended by New Dealers that by no means can these be construed as forecasting what might occur at the coming general elections.

Working people, millions and millions of whom benefited from the New Deal, have not forgotten the hardships endured through four years of Hooverism. Big business, through its professional politicians and subsidized newspapers can holler their heads off, but the good that came to working people through the institution of the New Deal has made an impression which we feel confident cannot be blotted out between now and next Fall's election.

It is true that some of the criticisms launched against the Administration may be well placed. But when one stops to consider what it meant to provide work and sustenance for some 40 millions of people, and to try to put a country like the United States on its feet when its financial and business conditions were on the verge of bankruptcy, it is not surprising that some of the experiments may not have met with expectations.

But this makes little or no impression upon those determined to put the New Deal out of commission. The minions authorized to speak for big business, with-

standing the fact that business during the past two years has made remarkable advances, and that the so-called capitalists of industry who were "in the dumps" in 1933 are typically recouping their fortunes, are taking advantage of every loop-hole in their endeavors to poison the minds of the masses of working people against it.

What is actually behind this whole affair? It can't be their opposition to the New Deal, as they are in full force and effect, when the NRA was in full force and effect, the President and his entourage were hailed as "Saviors of the Nation." But this was while business leaders were beginning to see daylight—when everything began to look rosier—and hopes of recouping their huge salaries and dividends were in the making.

They found no fault then with sections in the NRA which gave working people certain rights, principally that of collective bargaining with employers, minimum wages and improved working conditions. Hypocritically, they bent the knee and accepted these changes without a murmur. Not until they had become secure in their belief that the return of prosperity was certain did they start their opposition. And for what reason? None other than that wealth would have to pay its proper share in defraying the expense.

There was no opposition to the processing tax when it was adopted as a means for reimbursing the Treasury with the billions appropriated for making loans to large industries, and to create jobs for more than five millions of unemployed workers. But when the time came to pay, there was H— to pay, as was also their opposition to all plans suggested as a means of giving all the people, the rich as well as the poor, a square deal.

To demonstrate this absolute opposition to the New Deal, its opponents, who were the principal beneficiaries, were the prime movers in destroying it through machinations, which brought the NRA before the Supreme Court on a test case.

Since then, it has been a battle between big business, through its political minions, and the Administration. Present indications are, however, that the President is still "on top" and that notwithstanding all the vicious newspaper and magazine propaganda launched during the past year, the President is "thumbing his nose" at his adversaries, feeling confident that although big business has asserted him, he still has on his side the millions of working people, who look upon him as the "Savior of mankind."

## A New Idea to Provide Cheaper Electrification

South Carolina Public Utility Commission Proposes Wholesale Rate to Encourage Use of Electricity by Groups in Rural Districts.

The work of the Rural Electrification Administration is showing up in places where it begins to mean something more tangible than even an electric current. The South Carolina Public Utility Commission is proposing to put the wholesale rate for current on a schedule starting at 1½ cents per kilowatt hour and dropping to 5 mills. This rate is intended to be available for cooperative groups of farm owners and country communities, to make current available for use outside of cities at a rate which will actually encourage the freer use of this transportable energy by housewives and farmers.

Another new idea put forward by the REA is the cutting out of the construction charge to country users of electric current, and putting the charges upon a minimum use rate entirely, while the service will be in a given line of new line. State Public Service Commissions and public utility companies responding to the new program for extending electric service lines, and the concurrent reduction of prices for electrical service units such as refrigerators, stoves and the like, are acting as a spur to this development.

There can be no doubt that this new policy of the power companies will have a stimulating effect on employment all along the line, from the construction of the new service lines in country places to the manufacture of the service equipment and household utilities.

## HOME WORK MENACE

The U. S. Women's Bureau finds that women and children are working in poverty-stricken homes at rates which net as low as three cents an hour. This is in making parts for artificial flowers.

Chiselers who pay starvation rates for industrial home work are reported by the Women's Bureau to be found in every part of the country, though most commonly in the industrial cities. Every center of such "home industry" is a deadly menace to decent wages.

## Pres. Green Strongly Endorses Christmas Seal Campaign

In a letter addressed to all State branches, Councils, and Districts, William Green of the American Federation of Labor gives strong endorsement to the Christmas Seal campaign, and urges the liberal purchase of these stamps for organization and workers of its organization.

"There is no condition in life which teaches human emotions so deeply as that of sick men, women and children unable to buy the seal. Care and protection of these distressed people is an obligation. Therefore, I appeal to all to give as they have never given before, to the tuberculosis associations so that they may continue their work against this terrible disease."

"We should strengthen our support of the tuberculosis associations because their help and assistance are badly needed. The contribution that any individual makes through the purchase of Christmas Seals represents the discharge of a civic duty which he should perform. Be generous and liberal."

WILLIAM GREEN,  
President, A. F. of L.

## A. P. Lists 196 Judicial Autocrats

The Associated Press has been making a survey of the Federal courts. Counting the members of the Supreme Court, it finds 196 Federal judges. Of these 196 Federal judges, 107 are Democrats and 89 are Republicans. The President—precisely all of them by Harding, Coolidge and Hoover—were selected by Democrats—Woodrow Wilson or Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Those figures would be of little importance if it were not for the fact that Federal judges claim the right to qualify any law enacted by Congress. And they become additionally significant when we realize that practically every decision against the New Deal has been rendered by a Federal judge. These judges are being systematically picked off the state books by judges picked by the party repudiated by the people.

"There is no other country in the world in which the courts are so powerful. To make our situation still more intolerable, the judges judge judges. There is not a line in our Constitution to support it," says Labor, official newspaper of the Railway Brotherhood.

## LABOR QUERIES

Questions and Answers on Labor! What It Has Done: Where It Stands on President's New Deal; Its Aims and Program; Who's Who in the Ranks of the Organized Labor, etc., etc.

Q—How many unions have membership in the Building Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor?  
A—Nineteen.

Q—Is the move by labor for the six-hour day a development of the demand for the eight-hour day?  
A—Labor has seen the movement coming for many years. In 1915, the American Federation of Labor convention declared that many unions declared soon would demand the six-hour day, and that Congress was directed to give help to all such organizations.

Q—Is there an American Federation of Labor? If so, where are they employed by states, counties and cities?  
A—There will soon be, as President E. Claude Babcock of the American Federation of Government Employees has issued a call for a convention in Chicago beginning December 15, 1935. The convention will include all country and municipal employees. Mr. Babcock's organization has been authorized by the A. F. of L. to include these workers in its jurisdiction.

Q—Who said "I regard it as the imperative duty of all members of Congress to give their moral and financial support to the labor press of the country?"  
A—Samuel Gompers.

Q—How did coal miners first organize?  
A—Earliest unions were as assemblies of the Knights of Labor. The National Federation of Miners and Mine Laborers was formed in 1895.

Q—What was followed in 1895 by the National Progressive Union, in 1898 all the coal miners' organizations combined in the United Mine Workers of America.

Q—What union was the last of the craft divisions to leave the International Typographical Union?  
A—The Typo-Gravure Union of North America.

Q—The Typo-Gravure Union of North America was founded in 1860 and which was recognized by the A. F. of L. in 1905.

Q—The I. T. U. was originally a fraternal union composed of the various crafts in the printing industry.

Q—Has labor taken any standard of the time of the cans for beer?  
A—The United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America, recently announced its plan to labor on the ground that the cans are not made by the product of the labor and manufacturing plants. The board of labor for support of the union, used as glass bottles for beer, and for the purpose of that these bottles are made under union conditions under the use of the union label.



## RAILROAD MAGNATES MAP VICIOUS ATTACK ON RAILROAD PENSION ACT

**Will Spend Large Amount of Railway Earnings in Attempt to Deprive Employees of Protection Against Poverty in Their Old Age—American Federation of Labor Supports Measure.**

With scant consideration for the equity of the situation, the executives of the larger railroads have engaged a committee of lawyers to plan a scheme for using the Constitution of the United States in an attack on the railroad pension legislation enacted by the recent session of Congress in place of the first rail pension act which was invalidated last Spring by a five-to-four decision of the United States Supreme Court.

The railroad executive decided on November 8 to bring a test suit. Since then the group of high-paid lawyers, who claim the Federal Constitution bestows upon Congress no right to enact the social legislation now embodied in the pension laws, have been compiling a vast amount of precedent and similar literature designed to impress the nine members of the Supreme Court with the validity of the rail-social and subversive position taken by those who own and control American railroads.

The pension legislation which has aroused the venom of the rail executives is in two separate laws.

One stipulates that highest pensions shall be paid to railroad employees when they reach the age of 65, no

hardness of their years of service, or when they are 61 or more years old and have 30 years' service, or when at any age they have completed 30 years of service and are retired for mental or physical disability.

Under the second law a tax of three and one-half percent is imposed on the payrolls of the railroads and three and one-half per cent on the wages of railroad employees.

Railroad accountants place the first year's cost to the railroads at \$64,000,000.

It is estimated that around 75,000 employees over 55 years of age are now eligible for pensions and that other thousands are eligible because of 30 or more years of service.

It is these two pension laws against which the railroad lords intend to throw the Federal Constitution with all the vigor their fancy-constructed legal satellites can muster.

In this connection it is instructive to note that the recent convention of the American Federation of Labor declared the Railroad Retirement Act of "tremendous importance to labor and of great benefit to railroad employees" and urged "that the constitutionality of this Act be defended in every proper and legal way."

## PITTSBURGH COAL CO. PREPARES BIG FIGHT AGAINST GUFFEY ACT

Contending that the Guffey Coal Stabilization Act would injure rather than improve conditions in the coal industry, the Pittsburgh Coal Company, controlled by the Mellon interests, petition the Federal court here for an injunction restraining the government from imposing the taxes and penalties set forth in the act.

Blossoming forth as a staunch defender of the principles for the protection of property owners which he claimed estimate the Federal Constitution, J. D. A. Morrow, president of the company, said it takes the position that "Congress has no power under the constitution to regulate the continuous coal industry as provided in the Guffey Act."

Although the Constitution expressly confers on Congress the power to promote the general welfare, and although this object is one of the major purposes of the Guffey Act, the company declared the act unconstitutional, and it designated purely legislative powers to administrative boards, unconstitutionally deprives the company of

its liberty without due process of law, and unconstitutionally invades the field of State rights.

And then, for good measure, the company objects to 15 per cent tax on the selling price of coal, with a 50 per cent rebate for those operators who conform with the terms of the law, on the ground that it is not a revenue measure but an "enforcement club."

"The company is convinced," Mr. Morrow said, "that if the Guffey act were made operative it would provide rising costs in the industry, higher and higher prices to coal consumers, and consequent further losses of business to competing fields and increased unemployment among the miners."

In addition, it is the endorsement of the American Federation of Labor, the 1935 convention of that organization having congratulated the United Mine Workers of America on the enactment of the law, which organized labor will bring peace to an industry which has seriously suffered from unfair labor and trade practices.

## 1,804 FEDERAL LABOR UNIONS ORGANIZED BY A. F. L. IN TWO YEARS

**President William Green Says 538 of Them Were Established in Mass Production Industries—Cites Important Achievements for Railroad Labor—Declares for Maintenance of Solidarity and Warnings of Dangers.**

A strong defense of the organization achievements in the mass production industries of the American Federation of Labor during the past two years was made by William Green, president of the Federation, at a press conference held in connection with his letter to the executives of national and international unions, dated with the A. F. of L., protesting against their organization of the "Committee on Industrial Organization" to combat the declared policy of the Federation on organization policy adopted by the 1935 A. F. of L. convention.

Mr. Green pointed out that during the past two years the Federation has created 1,804 Federal labor unions, 538 of which were established in mass production industries. Of these 1,804 unions, 133 are in the automobile industry, 17 in the aluminum industry, 12 in the radio industry, 21 in the gas and by-product coke industry, 65 in the gasoline station industry, and 59 in the rubber industry. In addition national unions have been established in

the automobile and rubber industries. He declared the American Federation of Labor recognizes its organization policy that in many industries employing thousands of workers a new condition exists requiring organization upon a different basis to be more effective, and that this new condition has received consideration in connection with protecting the jurisdictional rights of all trade unions organized upon craft lines.

He cited the important achievements for railroad labor resulting from the difference of unionism with which the different craft unions in the railroad industry have acted as proof that solidarity of action and effective results can be realized under craft unionism. In commenting on his opposition to the separate movement within the American Federation of Labor sponsored by the executives of six national unions in their "Committee on Industrial Organization," Mr. Green said he feared it would have a disruptive effect. "All I want to do," he declared, "is to maintain solidarity and warn of its dangers."

## FIVE-YEAR PROGRAM OUTLINED BY NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL TO REDUCE WHOLESALE SLAUGHTER ON HIGHWAYS

**Through Nation-wide Educational Campaign to Be Started January 1st and Localized in Each State, It is Hoped to Save 35,000 Lives—Plan Includes Broad Program of Enforcement Activities.**

A five-year campaign to reduce motor vehicle deaths at least 35 per cent by the end of 1940, looking toward the saving of at least 35,000 lives, is being launched by the National Safety Council.

The drive will start January 1, to coincide with growing interest throughout the country. It will be localized for each state and for practically every city. Thereafter cooperation will be maintained with public officials, police, fire, safety, motor groups, educational heads, civic organizations and interested individuals. On January 1, it is planned to coordinate much of the existing safety work, to centralize and standardize methods through application of tested methods proved by successful experience.

Close cooperation with Federal departments is assured. The campaign, largely educational, will include a broad program of engineering and enforcement activities.

New ways of appealing to the individual motorist, to arouse a sense of responsibility and sportsmanship will be sought. A definite state-wide school program will be with the organization of state safety councils and local safety organizations in cities. The adoption of uniform laws, including standard driver's license legislation, will be urged, together with adequate attention of traffic laws, including the elimination of the "death" penalty. The formal resolution, passed unanimously by the Executive Committee at a recent meeting, "pledges

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## MONTGOMERY WARD

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The Council's whole-hearted assistance and the active efforts of thousands of its members in all parts of the country and invites the cooperation of all interested organizations and agencies to the end that during this five-year program at least 35,000 lives shall be saved and the killing and maiming of little children and all our people shall cease upon our highways.

The time is particularly propitious, since the 1935 toll of death and injury

## Taunton Unionists Pleased Over Election of Local Members

Members of organized Labor in Taunton were greatly pleased over the

election of two outstanding workers at last week's municipal election. In referring to this, Mrs. Gertrude L. Hoy, secretary of the Massachusetts Textile Council, writes as follows: "Dear Mr. Editor: I am so pleased over the outcome of our election in regard to Labor men that I am forwarding the news to you. Two very outstanding workers of the interest of Labor were elected to our Municipal Council last week. Harold Field, secretary of the Central Labor Union, a member of Taunton Typographical Union, who has spoken on different occasions at our Council meetings, and Ralph Richardson, president of Silverthorn's Local 11, were the successful candidates. "I know you will be as pleased to hear this as I was. It is really what we need more of. If we want any justice done towards Labor."





**FIRST NATIONAL STORES**

